342 either to the south or to the west. This is what the villagers refer
353 to as the kōng-thiⁿ:, or "court," and it is here, on a high altar
718
342 facing the door, that one finds the family's ancestral tablets. In a new house the kōng-thiⁿ: is invariably the cleanest, best cared for, and most expensively furnished room in the house. If the family owns a radio or a phonograph it will be found on a table in the kōng-thiⁿ:, or if they happen to possess a piece of calligraphy by some notable this will be found hanging in the kōng-thiⁿ:. Even the use of building materials will usually reflect the central and public character of the
233 kōng-thiⁿ:. In many of those village houses in which the floors of
718 the kitchen and bedrooms are tamped dirt, the floor of the kōng-thiⁿ:
342 is concrete, while in one of the few houses in which even the bedrooms and kitchen have concrete floors, the floor of the kōng-thiⁿ: is terrazzo.

778 As in so many other areas of life, the people of Hsiachichou think
659 of a house in terms of relative social status. The principles are very simple. What is to the left of the ancestral tablets is of higher status than what is to the right of the tablets, and what is near the
778 tablets is of higher status than what is distant from the tablets. The
554 guest of honor sits at the end of the table closest to the tablets
574 facing the door of the kōng-thiⁿ:, while the host sits at the end of the table most distant from the tablets facing the altar and the tablets. The second most distinguished guest sits to the immediate left of the guest of honor, or, as the villagers would see it, he takes the position on the left side which is closest to the family altar; while the third ranking guest is placed in the seat to the immediate right of the

198 less than half an acre. Many were tenant farmers who owned no land at
511 all, cultivating the fields of wealthy landlords in return for some
463 [429] percentage of the annual yield of the land. Until the relocation of the
Taipei Hsinchu railroad in 1923, a few landless families made a living
transporting local goods down the Tamsui River to markets in Wanhua,
[464] Hsinchuang, and Taipei. The only opportunities for industrial employ-
[346] ment were in the coal mines of Tucheng and Hsinchuang, and the work
198 there was often sporadic and always poorly paid. The generally low
511 standard of living in Hsiachichou was reflected in the construction of
342 • 333 village homes. Although kiln brick and tile had been inexpensively
produced in the Taipei region for at least a hundred years, there was
no one in Hsiachichou who could afford to build a brick house or to
roof his house with tile. Houses were built instead of wattled mud and
roofed with thatch. It was not until the early 1920's that the first
brick and tile house was constructed in Hsiachichou, and the use of
these materials did not become common until the end of the next decade.
Of the 47 houses in Hsiachichou in 1935 only 15 boasted a tile roof, and
of these only 4 had more than one brick wall. As the older villagers
so often put it in describing their former condition, "We were the kind
of people who had to sell our rice and eat sweet potatoes."

*599 Living so close to poverty and yet aware of the luxuries enjoyed
511 by their landlords and the wealthier merchants, many families in
435 Hsiachichou must have been tempted to sell one of their male children
as a bíⁿg-lâng-kiá:. There was always a ready market for male children
on Taiwan, and the price they commanded was for most village families

ultimate goals and overall responsibilities. The result was that most female children were given out in adoption despite the fact that this committed them to an unhappy life. Whatever fears a child's parents may have had about her fate as an adopted daughter could not save her because they were not the decision makers, and even if they had been it is doubtful that they could have done other than give the child away. Most families were so constrained by their limited means and their goals that there was little room for concern about the child's personal welfare.

In the years since 1930 this situation has changed considerably. For one thing, the poverty which forced many families to give away their female children as a means of conserving their resources has been greatly alleviated. Most of the villagers of forty and fifty years ago earned a living as tenant farmers, but the post-war population of the village has included a number of skilled workers, several families with fairly large land holdings, several school teachers and petty officials, and a dozen or more families who own small and fairly prosperous businesses. Even those who still earn a living on small land holdings and as laborers are now earning more and living somewhat more comfortably than did their fathers and grandfathers. The general improvement in conditions in Hsiachichou is apparent in an improved diet, the widespread use of bicycles and radios, and most strikingly in the construction of village houses. The thatch roofs and wattled walls of the early decades of the century have been almost entirely replaced by tile and kiln brick. Of 49 houses in Hsiachichou

in 1960 only 8 had one or more mud walls, and none of the 49 were roofed with thatch. The average family is still not so well-to-do that they can afford to raise many daughters, and a daughter is still generally regarded as "something to lose money on." The difference is that now many families can afford the luxury of losing money on one or two of their daughters without sacrificing other values.

An equally important change has also taken place in the authority structure of the kê. Although the senior generations of the family still usually occupy the position of kā-tíu:, they have lost much of their authority over decisions concerning adoption. These decisions are now most often made by the child's own parents. As in the case of marriage, the senior members of the family still exert a considerable influence, and in a few cases the younger members of the family may leave a decision up to their parents. But while the grandparents are thus often able to negotiate the decisions they prefer, they are no longer able to dictate the disposition of their grandchildren. A woman who is now in her forties told us that when she was married her mother-in-law told her that she could only keep one of her daughters, and that she would have to give the rest in adoption. This could not happen today. A persuasive mother-in-law with firm control of her son might succeed in getting a daughter-in-law to give away several of her female children, but a strong willed daughter-in-law could probably manage to keep all of them if she so desired. As one of the older men complained to us, "Young people now won't listen to their parents. They do what they want to do. You can't tell them to do this or that.

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

*593 602 571 wife. He wants the security of a stable and permanent network of human relations.

341 342 59 [369] The farm houses of Taiwan are symbolic of this attitude toward the family. In Taipei and in the larger market towns there have always been houses designed for rental income, houses for transients who may stay a month or ten years, but they are barren houses designed only for the present occupants and not looking toward the future. In the country, even today, when a man builds a house he follows the old pattern. He builds with a vision of housing under one roof a large and prosperous family of many generations. Farmers are rarely wealthy on Taiwan. Although they are just as likely as anyone else to try to implement their dreams, they do so with a shrewd practicality. Instead of hoarding gold or borrowing money to build the huge U-shaped structure that is to house generations as yet unborn, they build the base of their future, a strong rectangular building. At each end of the rectangle, however, there are indications of the ultimate design—an unnecessary door, a carefully made archway clumsily boarded over until the day it will open into a new wing housing the family of a son or a grandson. The rectangle becomes first an L and finally a U whose arms may be extended again and again.

342 • 333 824 That part of Peihotien that lies upstream is often referred to as "Brick House Place," a designation that has survived from the building of the first all-brick house. Before that, houses were built of mud over bamboo wattling and roofed with rice thatch. A family who could tear down one of their mud walls and replace it with strong red bricks showed a sign of prosperity; their continuing good fortune could be seen in the replacement of another wall a few years later. [343] Now only unimportant buildings like pig pens or storage rooms have mud walls and all of the thatch has been replaced with shining tile roofs. There are mud houses left in the other villages of Hotien, but Peihotien exhibits its superiority in a rich display of red brick. Nowadays a new house begins in brick and tile.

342 787 The first step a family takes toward building a new house is to summon a geomancer. He is shown the family land and is expected to site the house in the position most favorable to the natural and supernatural phenomena. Evidently these variables are fairly uniform in a small area for nearly all of the houses of Peihotien face in the same direction, away from the river—sad from the point of view of Western aesthetics but undoubtedly well justified in terms of geomancy. Before

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

any construction begins, the family and the geomancer make careful enquiries of priests, the elderly, even the gods, to be sure that the house is not placed on the site of an old temple or shrine. Indignant gods could bring untold misery on the family for generations. When construction is underway, the geomancer supervises the building of the ritually important cooking stove, a large, square, brick structure which is intimately tied to the welfare of the family. If it is clumsily built, or improperly oriented, misfortune or even death may come to family members. The family must also prevent those who bear them ill will from secretly inserting dangerous magical objects in the partially constructed stove. If the carpenters and bricklayers are ill-paid or disrespectfully treated, they too might practice various forms of witchcraft on the stove or on the main roof beam. The welfare of the family in both the present and the future generations is irrevocably involved in the construction of their home.

The original rectangle of a new rural home may vary somewhat in size, floor plan, or interior decoration, but the basic outline is the same for all. In the center of the front wall of each house are double doors which open into the guest hall. In most houses the floor of the guest hall is of beaten earth, the same as the other rooms of the house, but in more affluent homes the hall is distinguished by a concrete floor. The one village home with concrete floors throughout displays a terrazzo floor in the guest hall. This room is the stage on which a family presents itself to the world. Here one often finds a scroll of unexpected quality and such luxuries as a radio or a sewing machine; here also are the material representations of the family's charter, their ancestral tablets. These are flat, rectangular slips of wood, rounded on the top like grave stones, each inscribed in black ink with the posthumous name of a deceased member of the family. In every home these are arranged on a tal, narrow altar table set against the wall opposite the front door. Tc the foreign eye this altar is a clutter of religious paraphernalia, but there is order here if not neatness. The gods take precedence over the ancestors and their images are thus always to the right of the atar; men take precedence over women and thus the tablets of men are always to the right of those of their wives. Where the tablets are arranged in a small lacquer box, the more recently deceased are at the front of the box; where they are arranged on open shelves, the most distant ancestors stand on the top of the shelf at the head of a pyramid.

Individually, the tables have little significance. They are simply

3:Wolf F-5 (1959-1961) 1968 AD5 Taiwan Hokkien AD5
Peihotien

but it was undeniably different. At that time the family was not particularly large: Lim Chieng-cua was not yet married and his elder brother wasn't living at home. Speculative neighbors might have expected the Lims to build the usual bottom wing of the U, adding a new wing, if their prosperity continued, when Lim Chieng-cua married. Instead, the Lims built a truly large house, a house that is still the largest in Peihotien. Due to the unusual individuality that has given the Lims a reputation for wisdom and leadership—a habit of seeing as important the same things as their neighbors but not feeling required to follow the conventional paths to their goals—Lim Chieng-cua and his father departed slightly from the usual practice. Rather than building a U-shaped house, they built their house in the form of a hollow square, leaving a small open courtyard in the center. The front of the square, however, deviated in no way from the conventional base for a U-shaped structure, even to the doorways for expansion at each end. They surrounded the house and the drying ground in front with a dignified brick wall, a useful addition in the city, but one rarely found in the northern villages now that bandit attacks are no longer feared. They also built a long, handsome brick pig pen, a final touch which both amused and awed their neighbors.

The Lims' guest hall is quite a large room, as it would have to be to retain proper proportions with the rest of the house. It is floored with lovely terrazzo, neatly and soberly. The floor is swept more often than in the other rooms and mopped every week or so. Puddles left by diaperless children are cleaned up fairly quickly, and concerted effort keeps the chickens and ducks from seeking shelter there. When we first moved into the house, there was no ceiling in the guest hall. The whitewashed walls stretched up to heavy beams richly darkened by years of incense smoke. Unfortunately, in his restless desire to improve and change, Lim Chieng-cua added a ceiling to the room. His neighbors consider it attractive, but I missed the stark dignity of those beams.

The Lims' guest hall is simply furnished, far more simply than their income requires. The prosperous families of Peihotien buy heavy, overstuffed chairs covered in plastic. In summer they are a torment to sit on for more than a few minutes, and in winter they smell musty and develop miniature landscapes of mold. The Lims, whether from modesty or from a more developed sense of comfort, retain the old rattan chairs that are comfortable year around. The family altar is another matter. Modesty here would not be a virtue: a

305 He was born in Sanlei, served a three-year apprenticeship in Taipei, worked in Taipei an additional four years and then returned to the village to establish his own shop. He claims that he earns less in the village but that his expenses are also less and that it is much more interesting to live in the village where he has many friends and rela-
463 tives. Finally, one man is a mason who performs most of
• 333 his work building elaborate tombs for a geomancer from Taipei.

463 759 The mid-wife is the only village woman who has a position the equivalent of a trade or profession. She is teaching a younger woman as her future replacement in the same manner in which she learned her skills but she has recently been required to attend an in-service training program at the clinic in Hsin Tien.

464 369 [465] Another possible way to earn money is to work in the city and live in the village by commuting daily. Five men are regular commuters although four of the five are also part-time farmers: two work in a metal plating factory near Taipei earning over $2,000.00 per month; one is a part owner of a bicycle sales and service shop in Hsin Tien; one works as a janitor at National Taiwan University in Taipei; and the last drives a truck for a Taipei fac-
493 tory. Men with the higher-paying jobs ride the bus and
494 with the lower-paying jobs, their bicycles, but because the bus service between the village and Hsin Tien is so